

cry of certain leading politicians, and I agree with that. But how can we say put Social Security first, and then go out and introduce a whole bunch of new spending programs?

The way our budget is done, Social Security is really not a separate trust fund. Right now Social Security has an overpayment in it of about \$100 billion. When we add that overpayment to the deficit, we come up with the sum of zero.

So let us be honest. Social Security, if taken off budget, still leaves us with a deficit.

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It is very important for all of us, young and old, to realize that; that when we say the budget is balanced, all we are saying is Social Security is part of the general fund.

If we are going to put Social Security first, we sure do not do that and then turn right around, as the President has done, and introduce \$100 billion in new spending programs. Because that money comes right out of Social Security.

I am sick and tired of Social Security being the political football and used to scare all the folks who are on it in the United States of America. We need to be honest about it. I believe we need to personalize Social Security, we need to have an open dialogue, and we need to acknowledge that, right now, the way the accounting is done it is being used to offset the deficit.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

(Mr. TIERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about campaign finance reform. As we witness the current spectacle of the Senate leadership preventing a clean vote on even modest campaign reform, I urge my Republican colleagues in the House to stand up and resist any attempts by the House leadership to follow in the footsteps of the Senate leadership.

Let us have a full and open debate in this House on campaign finance reform. Let us have a straight up-or-down vote on any one of the many measures that have been introduced here in the House. Let us not have a poison pill amendment. Let us have a clean vote so that our constituents can know where we stand on this very important issue.

Madam Speaker, I note that 187 of my colleagues have signed a discharge petition that would bring the issue of campaign finance reform to the House floor for a vote. I urge my Republican friends and colleagues who say that they, too, want reform to join us in this effort.

We may not agree on the actual context of any reforms, but the people in the House and all the Members therein are entitled to a debate that is open and honest and fair.

PUT REAL DOLLARS INTO THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

(Mr. NEUMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEUMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise to follow on the 1 minute done by my colleague from Georgia.

The Social Security System this year is collecting about \$450 billion from taxpayers all across America, including my 15-year-old son who is paying about \$300 into that system. So they are collecting about \$450 billion this year.

They are paying about \$360 billion back out to our senior citizens in benefits, and that leaves a \$90 billion surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund, and this is a true surplus. But instead of putting that money into a savings account to preserve and protect Social Security, that money, instead, is being put into the government's big checkbook, or general fund, and is being spent on other programs.

In the President's budget he did not propose that we take the surplus, whatever is left over in that big government checkbook, and put it into Social Security. Instead, his budget proposes we take that surplus, whatever is left over, which is not the way Social Security should be treated, and he proposes we take that and pay off non-Social Security debt. He does not propose we put that money back down into the Social Security Trust Fund where it actually belongs.

This is a big problem facing our country; and it is here in the near term, not in the long term. It is time to put Social Security first by putting real dollars into the Social Security Trust Fund.

TIME TO PAY OFF BALANCE ON NATIONAL CREDIT CARD DEBT

(Mr. MCINNIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCINNIS. Madam Speaker, the national credit card now carries a balance of \$5.5 trillion. Now, just in case those listening thought they heard me wrong, let me say that again. It is a trillion, \$5.4 to \$5.5 trillion, not billion, dollars in debt.

While the deficit this year may very well be zero, and that is of some question because of the Social Security issue and whether or not the Social Security funds create an artificial surplus, the last 60 years of government living beyond its means has brought us a debt that will not be zero for many, many more years when we consider the overall debt, not the annual deficit.

With a hundred billion dollar a year deficit year after year when the liberals controlled the United States Congress, the taxpayers now face a national debt that threatens our children's future. It is the time, the appropriate time, to start reducing that debt

on the credit card that has been used by years and years of abuse in the United States Congress.

I would like to invite fiscal conservatives on both sides of the aisle, both Republicans and Democrats, to work together on a bipartisan method to control spending, to cut wasteful programs, and to make government smaller. It is time to start paying off the balance on our national credit card debt.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, on February 24, on rollcall 18, I am recorded as not voting. Unfortunately, my flight into National Airport was delayed.

This bill provides for increased mandatory minimum sentences for criminals possessing firearms. Had I been recorded on that vote, I would have voted "aye."

FEDERAL AGENCY COMPLIANCE ACT

Mr. MCINNIS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 367 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 367

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 1(b) of rule XXIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1544) to prevent Federal agencies from pursuing policies of unjustifiable nonacquiescence in, and relitigation of, precedents established in the Federal judicial circuits. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. Each section of the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 6 of rule XXIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be fifteen minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee